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# SCIENCE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 1911

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

THE METHOD OF SCIENCE<sup>1</sup>

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SCIENCE governs human life by determining the conditions of existence and by furnishing the means of civilization. Religion prescribes the motives, government formulates the customs of mankind, science fixes what we can do and how. If, at the present meeting, we appropriately emphasize the rôle of science, it does not imply that we belittle the ethical or social factors of civilized life, but answers the demand for a more just and general recognition of the actual importance of pure science.

We are so accustomed to the practical advantages that have followed from abstruse science, that we connect them with their source only by a distinct mental effort. The wonders of practical science have been recited so often, that their reiteration has become tedious, and we no longer feel strongly impelled to felicitate mankind on the parlor match, the telephone and the antitoxines, although we indulge at present in an unsubdued excited anticipation of wonders to come, especially in the domain of medicine. Are we not all on the watch for the announcement of the cure for cancer, and vaguely for other new and astounding reliefs from disease! Such concentration of interest upon novel practical results is not wholly favorable to science.

It is true that a large amount of investi-

<sup>1</sup>Vice-presidential address delivered before the Section of Physiology and Experimental Medicine of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Minneapolis, December 29, 1910.